HARRISBURG   The Department of Environmental Resources said today that it and other State and Federal agencies are working with Nease Chemical Company, Centre County, toward elimination of materials on the company's property which are believed to have caused Kepone and Mirex contamination in Spring Creek.

A meeting is being scheduled with the company which will be required to develop and carry out satisfactory solutions to the problem.

Surveys by the agencies have found significant quantities of Kepone and Mirex in the soils at former lagoon and spray irrigation waste disposal sites and in the sediments in drainage ways under the company's property, DER said. The residue in the soils are believed to be the source of the Kepone and Mirex contamination.

Government officials say that according to the best information available, the only solution to the problem requires decontamination of significant amounts of soil and sludges that are on the property.

Periodic sampling of fish in the watershed will continue until the sources of contamination are eliminated.

A study of fish taken from Spring Creek in September, 1976 documented levels of Kepone and Mirex in excess of current allowable temporary levels adopted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for interstate commerce. The samples were analyzed between September and December, 1976.

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The cooperati⬤ study between DER, the Pennsy⬤nia Fish Commiss⬤and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency yielded composite samples with levels of 0.025 parts per million (ppm) to 0.23 ppm of Kepone and from 0.02 to 1.0 ppm of Mirex in trout and suckers. The current FDA allowable level is 0.1 ppm for each substance.

Based on this sampling information, DER and the Fish Commission advise that fish taken from Spring Creek should be consumed only on an occasional basis as a precautionary measure.

DER and Federal specialists believe the level of pesticides found in the fish samples justify this action and will advise the Pennsylvania Fish Commission on the results of continued fish samples.

At the present time, trout cannot be taken from Spring Creek because the season is closed. Based on continuing information provided by DER, the Fish Commission will take appropriate action regarding management of the Spring Creek Fishery.

Spring Creek is an important and heavily used trout fishery in central Pennsylvania. In addition, the Pennsylvania Fish Commission operates hatcheries in the watershed, but most of the hatchery waters come from wells and springs rather than the stream. There is no evidence of contamination of hatchery fish.

DER said the latest samples were taken at various locations upstream of the Nease Chemical Company plant and extending to the mouth of Spring Creek. A sample also was collected from Bald Eagle Creek below the Spring Creek confluence.

An earlier survey indicated that Kepone was present in water, sediments and soils collected from the Nease property and in fish from Spring Creek downstream of the company property.

Nease Chemical Company was under contract to produce Kepone for Allied Chemical Corporation from April, 1958 to August, 1959, and from March, 1963 to August, 1963. The Company said it has not produced the substance since 1963, although other related substances have been manufactured. DER subsequently learned that the Company has produced Mirex for Hooker Chemical Company from April, 1973 to March,

1974.   The Company said that neither compound is currently being produced.

Kepone is a pesticide developed in the 1950's to fight ants and roaches. Mirex, chemically similar to Kepone, has been used extensively in fire ant control. Neither compound breaks down readily in the environment and the research that has been done indicates that the compounds are classified as carcinogens.

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